

ARCH407 Professional Practice and Ethics

2026-2027 Fall Term / Fourth year undergraduate architecture

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Weekly contact hours: 3

Office Hours: Tuesdays between 13:20-15:20

Class time and location: Tuesdays btw 09:20-12:20 at Z-13 Hall

Course description

This course introduces fourth year architecture students to the professional, ethical, organisational, and contractual dimensions of architectural practice. It examines how architectural services are defined, organised, coordinated, and delivered from project initiation through design, construction, and completion.

Topics include professional responsibilities, practice organisation, client relationships, service agreements, project delivery methods, multidisciplinary collaboration, programme and financial management, regulatory approvals, quality assurance, and risk management. International approaches are examined critically in relation to architectural practice and the applicable legal and institutional context in Türkiye.

Through lectures, document based analysis, presentations, discussions, and an individual case study undertaken in collaboration with an architectural firm, students investigate how professional decisions influence project processes and outcomes. Particular emphasis is placed on ethical judgement, evidence based analysis, responsible use of professional information, and clear visual communication.

Course objectives

- Understand the relationships between professional responsibility, ethical judgement, practice organisation, and project delivery.
- Examine how architectural services, agreements, and delivery arrangements establish responsibilities and expectations.
- Analyse the coordination of people, information, time, financial resources, quality, and risk throughout a building project.
- Investigate the regulatory and approval processes relevant to architectural practice in Türkiye.
- Develop evidence-based interpretations of professional practice through interviews, document review, and critical reflection.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain architects' responsibilities to clients, users, colleagues, the profession, the public, and the environment.
2. Analyse how practice organisation, service scope, and contractual relationships influence project delivery.
3. Reconstruct a project's principal stages, approval processes, stakeholder relationships, and decision points using appropriately documented evidence.
4. Evaluate approaches to coordination, programme, fees, construction cost, quality, and risk within a selected project.
5. Assess professional and ethical challenges by considering relevant obligations, alternative actions, and their consequences.
6. Compare observed practice with relevant professional principles and applicable Turkish requirements, recognising differences in context.
7. Communicate a critical project analysis through clear diagrams, concise writing, traceable references, and professional discussion.

Teaching and learning

Teaching combines focused lectures, guided readings, case discussions, document analysis discussions, professional interviews, and guest contributions. Students apply weekly topics to their selected project and develop the final submission progressively through formative feedback.

Class activities may include analysing an appointment, mapping approval procedures, reviewing a design change, simulating a coordination meeting, and discussing an ethical dilemma. Guest sessions will focus on practical decisions and anonymised professional records.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings, contribute to discussions, maintain an evidence register, and revise their analyses following feedback. Weekly reading extracts and supporting documents will be announced through the course platform.

Assessment

Assessment	Weight	Focus
Midterm examination	40%	Written exam. Theoretical analysis.
Final case study	60%	Term work submission. Evidence based project analysis presented on A1 posters and discussed in an individual presentation.
Total	100%	

Weekly schedule

Wk	Topic	Teaching content	Term Work / Case study development
1 29/09	Introduction	Syllabus, information about the course	
2 06/10	Professional responsibility and ethics	Ethical codes	Identify possible firms and projects. Review consent, confidentiality, attribution, and evidence requirements.
3 13/10	Professional responsibility and ethics	Duties to clients and society, competence, conflicts of interest, project lifecycle.	Submit a one page case proposal and interview questions. Confirm access to relevant project phases.
4 20/10	Architectural Design Process	Building programming, stakeholders, processes (Guest Professional)	Prepare a brief firm profile and explain how the commission and project team were established.
5 27/10	Architectural Design Process Defining the commission	Client requirements, services and exclusions, compensation, negotiation, client and consultant agreements.	Making Appointment
6 03/11	Project delivery arrangements	Procurement and delivery approaches, contractual relationships, timing of consultant and contractor involvement.	Meeting Draw contractual and communication relationships. Explain the reasons for the selected arrangement.
7 10/11	Regulation and approvals in Türkiye	Professional roles, planning and building approvals, submissions, revisions, relevant authorities. (Guest professional)	Meeting Prepare an approval flowchart showing documents, responsible parties, dependencies, and available dates.
8 17/11	Time and financial resources	Work planning, architectural labor; programme monitoring, fees, design service expenditure versus construction cost.	Meeting Compare intended and actual programme where possible. Examine the effects of changes on resources and cost.
8 24/11	Design development and coordination	Decision making, multidisciplinary reviews, information exchange, revision control, BIM where applicable. (Guest Professional)	Meeting Reconstruct the design timeline and investigate one coordination issue using drawings or records.
10 01/12	Documentation and quality	Drawing and specification coordination, checking, review responsibilities, compliance and performance evidence.	Meeting Analyse one revision, omission, or checking procedure and explain its consequences.

Wk	Topic	Teaching content	Term Work / Case study development
11 08/12	Tendering and construction	Contractor selection, construction agreements, queries, substitutions, site records, changes and payment procedures. (Guest Professional).	Trace one issue from construction documentation to site resolution. Confirm the architect's actual role.
12 15/12	Risk and professional judgement	Risk allocation documentation, insurance concepts, dispute avoidance, ethical responses under pressure.	Evaluate one significant risk, disagreement, or professional tension and the response adopted.
13 22/12	Completion and lessons learned	Handover, defects, feedback, performance claims, post-occupancy review and organizational learning. (Guest Professional)	Prepare the critical synthesis and recommendations. Submit draft posters for review.
14 29/12	Case presentations and reflection	Individual presentations, defense of interpretations, cross-case comparison, transferable lessons.	Present the case study and respond to questions.

Term Work (Final assignment)

Analysis of Architectural Practice and Project Delivery

Each student will undertake an individual, evidence based investigation of a building project in collaboration with an architectural firm. The study will examine pre design, design, regulatory approvals, and construction (if possible), with completion and building use feedback considered where evidence is available.

The analysis must explain what occurred, why significant decisions were made, how responsibilities were allocated, what challenges arose, and how these affected the project. It must relate observed practice to course concepts and the project's actual Turkish legal, contractual, and institutional context.

Required investigation

Firm and commission. Explain how the commission was obtained, the firm's relevant expertise, and how the project team was organised.

Brief and services. Identify client and user needs, agreed deliverables, exclusions, responsibilities, and changes to the original scope.

Delivery and approvals. Map contractual and communication relationships. Identify project-specific approval requirements, documents, authorities, submissions, and revisions.

Design decisions and coordination. Reconstruct the main design stages and analyse key decisions, multidisciplinary coordination, information exchange, and changes.

Programme and financial resources. Examine scheduling, workload, fee arrangements, and construction cost where information is available. Clearly distinguish these financial categories.

Construction and quality. Trace a construction-stage issue, checking procedure, substitution, or design revision. Explain who assessed, authorised, and recorded the response.

Risk and ethics. Evaluate at least one significant risk or professional tension, considering affected parties, relevant obligations, realistic alternatives, and consequences.

Lessons and recommendations. Identify effective practices and propose justified improvements, acknowledging the limits of the evidence.

Project selection and evidence

Select a completed project or one sufficiently advanced to provide meaningful construction evidence. Conduct at least one substantive interview, followed by clarification where necessary. Evidence may include authorised drawings, programmes, approval records, meeting minutes, specifications, correspondence, and photographs.

Maintain an evidence register identifying each source, its date, the information it supports, and any limitations. Distinguish documented facts, interview statements, interpretations, and recommendations. Missing access to a document does not establish that the firm never produced it.

Course policies

Attendance and participation

Regular attendance, preparation, and active participation are required. Attendance is recorded by scheduled contact hours. Minimum attendance and the consequences of exceeding the permitted absence follow the applicable university regulations. Required attendance threshold is 60%.

Academic integrity and professional conduct

Students must submit their own analysis, acknowledge all sources, credit drawings and images, represent interview evidence accurately, and treat colleagues and professional participants respectfully. Discussion with peers is encouraged, but the final investigation and submission must demonstrate individual work.

AI-assisted work must comply with university policy and any task specific instructions. Permitted assistance must be disclosed, including its purpose and extent. Students remain responsible for verifying all claims, citations, and outputs. Fabricated interviews, documents, references, or project evidence are prohibited. Suspected misconduct will be addressed under university procedures and may result in academic penalties or disciplinary action.

Confidentiality and access

Obtain permission before recording interviews or reproducing professional materials. Use redaction, anonymisation, or qualitative descriptions when information is confidential. Do not upload confidential project information to external services without authorisation. Clearly label unavailable information. Public exhibition or subsequent reuse requires separate permission.

Reading list

Core textbook

American Institute of Architects. (2013). *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice* (15th ed.). Wiley. ISBN 9781118308820.

Supporting readings

Emmitt, S. (2014). *Design Management for Architects* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Winch, G. M. (2010). *Managing Construction Projects: An Information Processing Approach* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Wasserman, B., Sullivan, P., & Palermo, G. (2000). *Ethics and the Practice of Architecture*. Wiley.

Allinson, K. (1998). *Getting There by Design: An Architect's Guide to Design and Project Management*. Architectural Press.

Gültekin, A. T. (2007). *Proje Yönetimi*. Palme Yayıncılık.